

Waukegan, IL - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) secured over \$2.6 million for the United States Army Corps of Engineers to continue the environmental restoration of Waukegan's Inner Harbor. Funding was included at Kirk's request in the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Act approved by the House Appropriations Committee today.

In conjunction with the EPA, and their support of the project through the Great Lakes Legacy Act, the clean up of the Inner Harbor will eventually help lead to Waukegan Harbor's delisting as an International Joint Commission polluted "Area of Concern" (AOC). The delisting is critical to Waukegan's revitalization.

"No single project is more important to Waukegan's economy than the environmental restoration of Waukegan Harbor," Congressman Kirk said. "I am pleased Congress answered my request for these funds. The success of Waukegan's revitalization depends on the cleanup of her harbor. Studies show that a clean harbor could add over \$800 million to Lake County property values, including an average increase in value of \$53,000 for homes in Waukegan."

Waukegan's inner harbor was home to the worst PCB (PolyChlorinated Biphenyls) contaminated site in the United States. While 90% of the initial contamination has been cleaned up, the remaining 10% must be eliminated to begin a \$500 million redevelopment effort. Waukegan's redevelopment could become the second largest economic development effort in Illinois behind the modernization of O'Hare Airport.

Kirk also secured \$5.2 million for flood control projects currently underway on various parts of the Des Plaines River. These projects are vital in protecting 7,000 homes and businesses from catastrophic flood damage. A "100 year" flood of the Des Plaines River cost communities more than \$100 million in 1988. Another "100 year" flood in 2004 may have done similar damage if it weren't for the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and the men and women of the United States Navy. Congressman Kirk enlisted the Navy volunteers to fill thousands of sandbags protecting homes, schools and businesses in Gurnee, Libertyville and Mount Prospect from severe flood damage last May.

"Completion of these projects will help protect several hundred thousand people currently living along the Des Plaines River," said Kirk. Controlling flooding along the River also yields economic benefits to several businesses along the riverbed who over the years, have lost millions to flood damage."

The Des Plaines River funds will complete the design and begin construction of Levee 37, located in Mount Prospect. The funds will also be used to continue flood control projects along Palatine Road and several other communities that border the Des Plaines River.

Contact: Matt Towson
847-940-0202
cell: 773-454-5396